

Bulletin

Towing Operators Division Body Repair Division



Reference No. Road Rule 79A and alternative flashing lights/kz-12-22

Date: 16/12/2022

Update: Trial of Road Rule 79A and alternative flashing lights

Dear Members

The Victorian Automotive Chamber of Commerce (VACC) wishes to update members on the progress of the trial. VACC has been lobbying the Victorian Government to have towing operators included in the protections afforded by Road Rule 79A. In addition to this, VACC is advising Government that towing operators should be able to use magenta or other coloured warning lights at the scene of an accident or at a roadside tow.

Road Safety Victoria (Department of Transport) is currently leading the VicRoads Incident Response Service (IRS) vehicles flashing lights trial. The trial aims to evaluate the road safety effectiveness of different coloured flashing warning lights. The 18-month trial involves IRS vehicles testing new red and yellow, and red and blue flashing warning lights. IRS vehicles are currently permitted to display yellow and white lights. Driver behaviour around tow truck involved events is also being captured in this study.

Study overview

Monash University Accident Research Centre (MUARC) will study the behaviour of motorists passing roadside incidents via 18 CCTV cameras along the Monash Freeway. Driver behaviour will be evaluated by measuring the approaching and passing speed of vehicles passing incidents attended by the IRS vehicles and tow trucks that are involved in these events.

On Road Study – Commenced in 21 October 2021

- Data is being collected from IRS vehicles displaying different light combinations, including:
 - **PHASE 1** - Red and Yellow - **Data collection complete**
 - **PHASE 2** - Red and Blue - **Data collection complete**
 - **PHASE 3** - Yellow and White (baseline state) – Scheduled to commence in January 2023

Tow Truck data is being collected throughout all three phases of on-road data collection with approximately 30 events captured to-date. Although, 30 events may seem a small sample, in the context of this study, it is a meaningful sample size.

In addition to conducting focus groups with VicRoads IRS and Victoria Police, DoT is currently investigating the opportunity to conduct a focus group with members of Tow-Truck Operations to complement the study.

Community Survey – Commences in March 2023

- A community survey will explore behavioural intentions, recent experiences, barriers/enablers to compliance, and awareness of RR79A.
- The survey will enrich the observations and outcomes from the on-road study

The outcomes of the trial will contribute to improvements for the safety of first responders conducting duties on and/or by the roadside.

Once the trial concludes, consideration to extending Road Rule 79A to other at-risk cohorts like towing operators will begin. VACC will continue to meet with Executive Management from Road Safety Victoria on a regular basis to ensure consideration of extending Road Rule 79A to at-risk cohorts, including towing operators, continues. VACC will also continue to lobby for an alternate colour light scheme.

Should you have any questions, please contact Kathy Zdravevski kzdravevski@vacc.com.au or 418 329 527.

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